

This is a cry for help. It is a challenge to Republicans and Democrats to come up with a plan that is not a red plan or a blue plan but an American plan to address his needs, his wife's needs, and those similar to him across the country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

HONORING THE GHOST ARMY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, thank you and Senator CASSIDY. We just came back, as we all know, from the Memorial Day recess. I wanted today not to only reflect on that but also to reflect on our anniversary of D-day and the day that our Allies invaded France in 1944. In doing so today, I would like to speak and pay tribute to all of those—including, but not limited to, Americans, but especially Americans—who risked their lives to defend our freedoms.

In particular, I come today to recognize a special group of dedicated soldiers. You probably have not heard of them, but they are referred to as the Ghost Army—the Ghost Army. This is a unit that served in World War II. It was comprised of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company. The personnel of this U.S. Army unit were handpicked. They were handpicked for their artistic and creative characteristics, and you will see why in just a moment.

They handled top secret information, and they were among some of America's most promising artists, engineers, and signals professionals. The mission of the Ghost Army was very simple: Fool Adolph Hitler—fool Adolph Hitler by using what was called tactical deception. The Ghost Army's deceptive creation of fake battles, inflatable tanks, theatrical props, and other inventive equipment falsified troop movements, and had our enemies chasing ghosts—hence the name the Ghost Army.

Beginning in Normandy 2 weeks after D-day and ending in the Rhine River Valley, the Ghost Army staged over 20 fake battles—fake battlefield deceptions. The German Army did not know whether they were coming or going, thanks to the Ghost Army. These performances, of course, were illusions. They were called illusions by the soldiers. They occurred in the most dangerous spot in the war, on the frontline of battle.

Now, without the Ghost Army's dedication and fearless perseverance, Allied successes at the Battle of the Bulge and the final battles in Po Valley, Italy, would not have been possible. The 23rd unit was composed of only 1,184 men—1,200 men. They put themselves at risk every day at the forefront of danger, and they fought tirelessly. They used ingenious, innovative methods to mislead the enemy, ultimately leading the Allies to many victories in Europe. Because of their bravery, because of the bravery of the 1,200 men in the Ghost Army, up to 30,000 American soldiers and 10,000 German soldiers were able to return home alive.

So why are we waiting until today to honor these 1,184 brave Americans? Because until recently the Ghost Army's mission was classified. It was top secret. Nobody except the members of the Ghost Army knew anything about it. This has finally changed. That is one of the reasons I am here today. I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Ghost Army soldier bill, a bipartisan effort led by Senators MARKEY, COLLINS, and KING. This long overdue legislation will award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company.

It is a privilege to share that, in my home State of Louisiana, the Ghost Army is being recognized at the New Orleans Museum of Art. Soldier's art is on display depicting many watercolor portraits, as well as graphite portraits, of civilians, soldiers, and refugees during World War II. It is a legacy that our great State now gets to honor.

Specifically, I want to recognize six brave men from Louisiana, my State, who were members of the Ghost Army. Hilton Howell Railey of New Orleans is a prominent journalist and the author of "Touch'd with Madness." He recruited several of the handpicked 23rd. Mr. Railey trained and deployed the 3133rd Signal Service Company, which served in Italy.

There is Jim Stegg of New Orleans, a longtime faculty member at Tulane. He was an artist; in fact, there is a retrospective of his work at the New Orleans Museum of Art's Ghost Army exhibit.

Also, there is Mr. Murphy P. Martin, of St. Martinville, LA; Mr. Thomas L. Raggio, of Lake Charles, LA; Mr. Roy L. Ravia, of Calcasieu Parish, in my State; Mr. Alvin J. Picard, of Vermilion Parish; and last but certainly not least, Mr. Anderson B. Wilson, of Slidell, LA.

Unfortunately, Mr. Wilson is the only Ghost Army soldier still alive in Louisiana. I had the rare privilege and the rare honor of speaking with Mr. Wilson this morning. In December of 1943, President Roosevelt authorized the Ghost Army unit. Only 2 weeks later, in January 1944, Mr. Wilson was on his way to Camp Mack Morris, TN, to join the Ghost Army. Who says the Federal Government can't move quickly when it wants to?

Mr. Wilson trained there until May, when his unit was shipped out of New York to Liverpool, England. It was the largest convoy that at the time had ever crossed the Atlantic Ocean. From there, Mr. Wilson and his team traveled more than any other unit. From England they went to France. They went to Belgium. They went to Holland. They went to Luxembourg, and they went to Germany.

Mr. Wilson and his comrades fought fearlessly through the war's end as members of the Ghost Army. In July 1945, Mr. Wilson finally came home. However, while he came home safely, he could not even disclose, he couldn't

even talk about—even to his own family—the honorable service unit he was a part of. Now, it is humbling to me to hear a man's sacrifice, to go through what he went through and not even be able to talk about it with his family, but he kept his word out of honor to his country.

The willingness of Mr. Wilson and his fellow soldiers to risk their own lives to defend the freedom we have today—well, it, too, is humbling.

Mr. Wilson returned home in 1945. And I hope he is listening right now. He has been a little under the weather. He was in the hospital when I spoke to him today. It wasn't until the 1990s, when Mr. Wilson was married with two grown children, that he could ever talk about his service to this great country, share his stories, share his experiences, share his fight to keep the freedoms all of us take for granted every day.

Mr. Wilson's story only gives a snapshot of the sacrifices and honorable work these men of the Ghost Army gave to the Allied forces victory. And I, for one—and I know all Americans join me—thank them for their service and for the freedoms they protected.

I am proud of this Ghost Army legislation, and I hope to see it move forward and pass so that these fine Americans can receive the recognition they have long deserved.

God bless the members of the Ghost Army. And if you are listening, Mr. Wilson, God bless you.

RECESS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:01 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Elwood nomination?

Mr. WICKER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 67, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 139 Ex.]

YEAS—67

Alexander	Cassidy	Daines
Barrasso	Cochran	Donnelly
Bennet	Collins	Duckworth
Blunt	Corker	Enzi
Boozman	Cornyn	Ernst
Burr	Cortez Masto	Feinstein
Capito	Cotton	Fischer
Carper	Crapo	Flake
Casey	Cruz	Gardner